A London Dramatic Critic Recommends American Methods Be Adopted

NEW YORK, Oct. 16.—We are wont to flay our American stage, to bewail commercialism, sordidness and other unhealthy signs, to score our actors, playwrights and managers for debasing themselves in this way and that.

Perhaps it is only the result of an intense desire for self-improvement.

At any rate, Cosmo Hamilton, the English dramatist and novelist, has recently paid us many great compliments by way of calling the London stage's attention to our excellencies and recommending that a few more New York playhouse ideas be transplanted to the English metropolis.

It all comes from the astonishing success of American plays in London. There has been such a long list in the last four years that some Englishmen are getting alarmed.

Mr. Hamilton thinks the American play succeeds because American dramatists are not thwarted and handicapped by a pernicious actor-manager system. He says in a letter just made public:

Writes for Business Man.

"The American dramatist writes for the business man and not for the actor-manager. The result is that his play, if accepted, goes to the public as it was written and is not accepted only on the absolute condition that its entire balance is thrown out in order that there may be a leading part which shall have all the 'sympathy'—whatever that may be—and all the curtains, as well as the best lines of every other part.

"The star system does, of course, prevail in America, and when a play falls into the hands of one of these generally extremely bad actors it may or may not be recognized by its despairing parent. But for the most part dramatists are untied, and there are any number of business men on Broadway who have not hitched their wagon to a star and who can find the most admirable, keen, sincere and all-round good casts for any play whose story is interesting, whose action is breathless, and whose humanity makes an appeal.

What If—

"Conceive, if you are able, the fate of such a play as 'Potash and Perlmutter' in England if it had been home-made and submitted to an actor-manager. How degeared would have become that splendid piece as it made its pitiful round of London theaters! It takes no extraordinary imagination to write the sort of comments that each reading would have evoked.

"'Dear Sir:—Your play is ill-constructed and the characters belong to a class that I could not possibly put upon my stage. The title, too, is misleading, and my public would certainly jump to the conclusion that its plot was written round a digestive medicine. If, however, you will see the wisdom of combining Potash with Perlmutter, making him a baronet or even a barrister connected in some way with the landed gentry, and pair him off eventually with a young girl of not more than 22 (who need have no more than a dozen nice, suitable lines), and you will accept a steady royalty of two percent and throw in the American, provincial, Australian, continental and picture rights, I may be inclined to consider it, owing to the fact that my present production is doing so well that I must withdraw it in a fortnight. I forgot to say that none of the characters must be Jews.'

Would Be Dead Ones.

"It goes without saying that 'Potash and Perlmutter' would now be lying under a layer of dust in an agent's office, side by side with hundreds of other plays which have been treated to such offers. Conceive the fate of 'On Trial' here, with a hero who only springs twice to his feet in the court and is made to listen, without informing the audience by yawning that he is only playing the part as a sort of rest cure, to the reputation-making of other actors.

"There are two reasons for the well-deserved success of American plays. The first is that their authors draw their characters from recognizable people with kind hearts, and the second that American actors take themselves and their work seriously and not as a few hours' relief from golf."

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E. H. Sothern is appearing in Alfred Sutro's comedy, "The Two Virtues," at the Booth theater. It is an amusing little affair which will probably succeed on account of the able acting which is lavished on it.

The master-actor was at his best. His role was that of Jeffery Panton, a Londoner who has amassed a fortune and now determines to write a really good history. His progress as a chronicler is slow until a woman who had jilted him in early life suddenly appears in his library. She makes a strange request. A woman has lured her poetic husband away and she thinks the man she once threw over is just the one to persuade her faithless spouse to take up his marital duties again.

Orlando Daly, who has been known as a comedian, is the poet, a role with which he has a struggle.

The business-man-historian has his breath taken away for an instant by the absurd proposal, but finally his good nature induces him to call on Mrs. Guildford (Charlotte Walker).

To his amazement, instead of a siren, he discovers a good mannered and cultivated young woman who is as much an enthusiast on world history as himself. It is an easy task to have her send the slightly unprincipled husband about his business, while she consents to assist Panton in his life work.

The reason for Mr. Sutro's title comes out in the third act. Here Panton, a sister and his one-time sweetheart break upon the innocent work of historical collaboration with frightful accusations against Mrs. Guilford.

The playwright thinks these two women are in need of two virtues, chastity and charity.

For the moment they succeed in their purpose of driving Mrs. Guilford from the house, but the historian follows her and all their difficulties are solved in the usual manner of happy endings.

Mrs. Sothern (Julia Marlowe) watched her husband from a box the opening night, while others present included Mrs. Richard Mansfield and Mrs. Edwina Booth Grossman, daughters of the late Edwin Booth.

* * *

The Washington Square Players have opened the Bandbox theater with four oneact plays. Of these the piquant "historical comedy" called "Helena's husband" was the most notable. It is Philip Moeller's own account of the elopement of Helen with the handsome Paris and the first full story of how the Greeks were forced to mobilize and take the field against the Trojans.

Helen is a shallow woman, who is moved even to tears because the stately Menelaus "doesn't understand her." Menelaus, on his part, is glad to be rid of her, but for reasons of state and conscience does not care to hand her a cup of hemlock. So he lets her flee with Paris, leaving behind her the usual note beginning "I am not a bad woman."

Then comes some of the cleverest satire of the evening. Menelaus is pacific by nature, but his country's national aspirations must be satisfied. His counsellors assure him that treaties are but scraps of papyrus and the sketch ends with the librarian bellowing from the balcony to the mob that the spear has been forced into their hand; that the order of mobilization is being signed and that with Zeus as an ally Troy will be reduced to ashes.

* * *

Miss Grace George's experiment of managing her own theater was tried out at the Playhouse Monday night with a revival of Langdon Mitchell's "The New York Idea," and was a distinct success.

While her husband, William A. Brady, looked on a bit nervously, Miss George and an excellent company performed this ever brilliant society comedy before an audience in which were many persons prominent in social and business affairs of the big city.

Most critics found Miss George as satisfying as was Mrs. Fiske nine years ago, in the role of pretty Cynthia Karslake. She showed the highest art in the difficult passage where she invites her one-time husband (Conway Tearle) to attend the wedding and give her away.

Although "The New York Idea" might settle down for a long run, this is not Miss George's idea. She will give plays by Galesworthy, Pinero and Jones and revive at least one comedy by Moliere and "The School of Scandal," while on "popular" nights the prices will bring good drama within the reach of the poor but appreciative.

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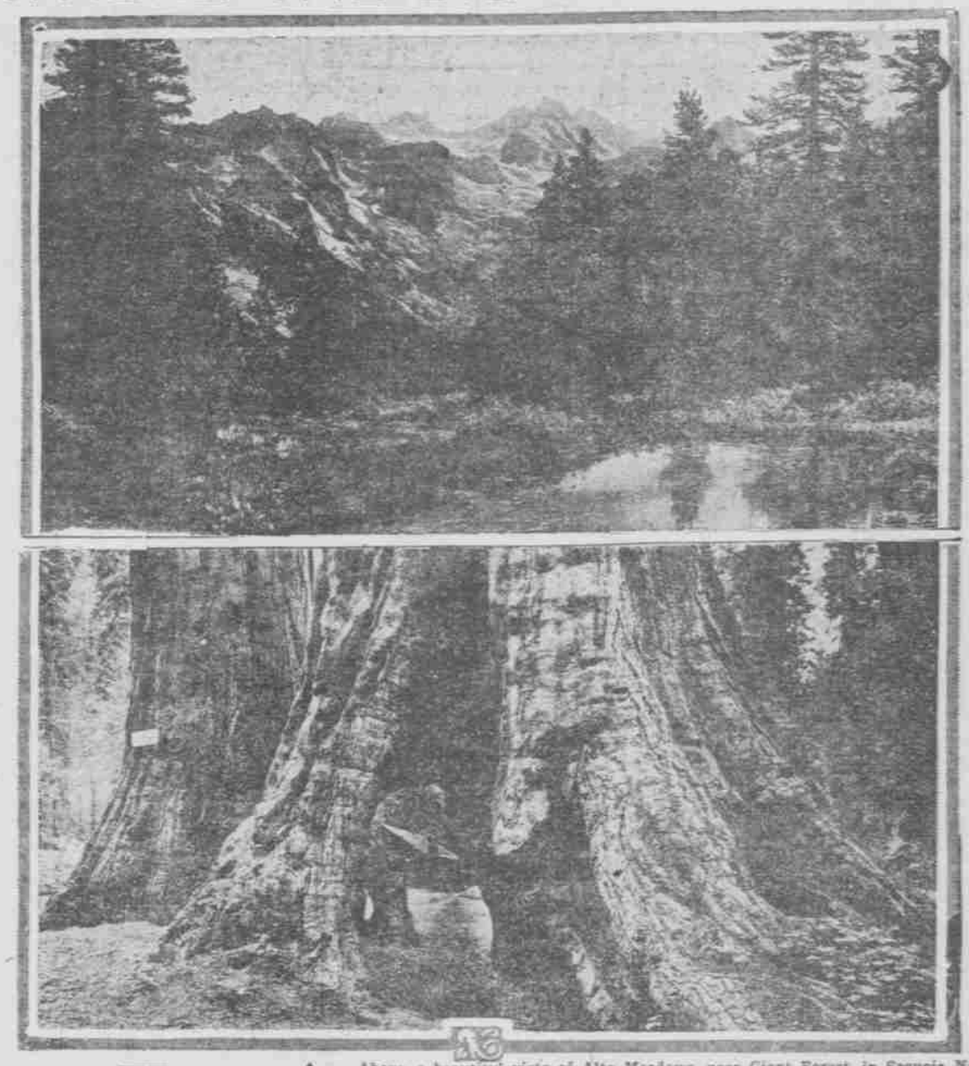
Miss Eleanor Painter leads the cast in "Princess Pat," a bright musical comedy at the Cort theater. The music is about the best Victor Herbert has ever turned out, while Henry Blossom, if a bit short on plot, has provided some capital lyrics.

One number of particular charm was "For Better or For Worse," sung by Miss Painter and Miss Eva Fallon. Miss Painter's "Love Is the Best of All" gave her fuller opportunity to show the wide registry and admirable control of her voice. Joseph R. Lertora, an Italian baritone, also established himself in the audience's good graces.

WHERE THE BIG TREES GROW



Wonderful Scenes In Our National "Big Tree" Parks.

By MARK DANIELS,
General Superintendent and Landscape Engineer of National Park.

SEQUOIA National park lies in the south central portion of the state of California and comprises over 161,000 acres. A few miles to the northwest of Sequoia park is Gen. Grant National park, containing a trifle over 2500 acres. These two parks are generally considered together.

Both Sequoia National park and Gen. Grant National park were set aside by the government for the purpose of preserving a series of groves of the giant Sequoia trees. In fact, Gen. Grant National park was set aside solely for the purpose of protecting the Gen. Grant tree, which is one of the three largest trees on earth. When the act creating these parks was passed, it was not thought that there was much in the vicinity which would justify the setting aside of these reservations with the exception of these giant forests. The fact remained, however, that in the vicinity of Sequoia National park are the deepest canyons in the world, the highest point in the United States and the oldest and greatest living things on earth.

In addition to this the finest mountains in the United States are those in which the Sequoia and Gen. Grant National parks are located. The plan for the development of Sequoia National park, therefore, takes on a somewhat different aspect, for it includes a plan for the material increase in the area comprised with in the boundaries of the park.

Greater Than Grand Canyon.

To the north, and a little to the east of Sequoia park there are the famous Kings River canyons. The canyon of the South Fork is every bit as impressive and magnificent as is the Yosemite valley. The upper level of one rim of the upper canyon of the Middle Fork is 7000 feet above the bottom of the canyon, which is nearly one-half mile deeper than the Grand Canyon of the Colorado in Arizona.

Separating the waters which traverse the Sequoia park flowing through the Kaweah canyon from the Kings River canyon are the great jagged peaks of the Kings Kaweah divide. To the east of the park and separated from it by the Kaweah peaks is the Kern canyon. This canyon is some 15 miles in length and its walls are 7000 to 8000 feet high on either side. Back of this to the east is the main ridge of the Sierra Nevada with its broken serrated crest towering to a height of two miles above the canyon floor. In this portion of the Sierra are Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the United States, rising to an elevation of 14,502 feet; Mount Langley, Mount Tindell, Mount Leconte and many other peaks 14,000 feet high or more. They are almost exclusively of granite and their spirelike architecture presents a most magnificent spectacle silhouetted against the sparkling azure sky.

Above Timber Level.

It should be borne in mind that the highest level reached by timber in this latitude is about 9000 feet, which leaves a very large proportion of this magnificent territory far above the level of commercial timber. There is little or no mineral in this formation and it would appear that the sole value of such an area is esthetic. Nevertheless there are those who oppose the setting aside of this wonderful mountain region as a portion of a great national park.

The conditions in the vicinity of Sequoia National park and in fact throughout the entire mountain region of the state of California are similar to those obtaining in other scenic districts throughout our country. The accommodations for the traveling public are entirely futile. As a matter of fact, throughout the 400 miles of length of the Sierra Nevada mountains, there is hardly a hotel or mountain inn anywhere near the summit of the range, and insofar as a chain of stations is concerned, there is nothing remotely approximating so desirable a condition.

Must Use Pack Animals.

Those few tourists who are financially able to defray the expense of a trip through the high Sierra, must travel with pack animals, saddle horses, cooks, guide and packers, and carry with them provisions for their entire trip. Such a method is prohibitively expensive.

Obviously, therefore, the steps that should be taken for the proper development of Sequoia National park, are the securing of small mountain and supply stations, operating from a general central point and covering sufficient area to embrace the almost innumerable scenically wondrous mountain peaks, great canyons and rivers of this district. Unfortunately, however, no such permit can be granted by the secretary of the interior, because the Sequoia National park does not contain within its boundaries more than a small percentage of the wonderful scenery of the district.

Some Famous Canyons.

Lying outside the boundaries in the immediately surrounding territory, are the famous King River canyon, Kern canyon, the streams wherein the golden trout abound and the great serrated crest of the high Sierra and the Kaweah peaks.

If the secretary of the interior were to attempt to secure an operator of sufficient financial strength to establish these mountain inns, he would find it difficult, due to the fact that the great areas lying without the park were not in his control, and he could not, therefore, grant permits. Before anything on a broad and comprehensive scale could be accomplished, therefore, it would seem essential that the entire district be comprised within the extended boundaries of the Sequoia National park, and it is sincerely hoped that action may be taken by congress in the near future, which will result in making possible a development scheme on a large and magnificent scale.

Would Enlarge the Area.

The area that should be taken in under the enlargement of the Sequoia National park should begin at the point approximately west of the town of Bishop of Inyo county, Calif., running thence to a point about due west of the southerly end of Owens lake. The easterly border of the park should follow along the crest of the Sierra Nevada and the westerly border should be an approximate northern extension of the present western border of the Sequoia National park.

Such an area would take in a portion of the North Fork and Canyon of the Middle Fork of the South Fork of the Kings river. It would include nine 60 or 40 miles of the crest of the continental divide and many small groves of Sequoia trees not now in the National park.

If this area were to be comprised within the borders of a national park it would then be possible to plan a circuit of mountain hotels and inns, covering the entire area, a chain of trails and a series of roads that would make available to the tourists and public the finest stretch of mountain scenery that can be found in the United States.

Above, a beautiful vista of Alta Meadows, near Giant Forest, in Sequoia National Park, California. Below, "Ohio," and "Hanerford," two of the monsters of the Mariposa Big Tree Grove, California. Through a hole in the trunk of "Hanerford" a log cabin may be seen.

Coiffures of Today and When Knights Battled and Minstrels Sang

Republished from Harper's Bazar for October.

FOR evening wear the hair is drawn high, puffed over the top of the head and rolled into a loose knot as shown in this sketch. Curls are also a feature.

THE little hennin, a head dress covered by a veil which fell over the shoulders. The husbands of the 15th century inveighed against the fashion.

UNDER large hats the hair is worn low in a soft loose knot that just escapes the top of the high collar. For old and young alike, this style will be popular.

A HEAD dress of the "Joan of Arc" period, 1430, that is at the time of Charles VII, of France, when the English were driven out of Orleans.

BY GARRETT P. SERVISS.

If you will watch a cat licking and smoothing her fur until it fits her everywhere like a silken coat, or a bird sedulously pruning its feathers until their beauty is fully displayed, you will perceive the working of the same instinct which causes human beings to spend a great deal of time and labor upon the care of their hair.

The hair has been called "the greatest natural adornment of the human body," and, under the conditions of civilized life, it is, perhaps, more ornamental than useful.

There is certainly no part of the body which has always, in every country, and in every state of society, been treated with so much disregard of natural tendencies as the hair. The interference with it ranges from efforts at total extirpation to the most careful training and cultivation.

Fashion has played with the hair in the most capricious way, among savages and civilized men alike. The hair of the face, which is generally confined to men, has been more subject to extreme changes of taste and fashion than that of the head. It is comparatively rare for the head to be shaved or otherwise artificially denuded of hair, but the shaving of the face seems always to have been practiced from the time when man first managed to make cutting instruments of sufficient keenness to sever the beard.

The history of the rise and fall of the mustache, repeated over and over again, like the swing of a pendilum, records the fluctuations of the ideal of masculine beauty, which seems never to become fixed. Of course, a great deal depends upon individual peculiarities; nevertheless there is a cycle of maximum and minimum governing the mustache, which is as rigorous as that of the snapshots.

We are now at a mustache minimum, and the severity of the social law which produces it is plainly indicated by the scarified and uncomfortably denuded appearance of many masculine upper lips which have been forced into the new fashion after having begun life under the subsiding mustache which was at its height in the days of Louis Napoleon.

In dealing with the hair of the head or scalp a real art has been developed, which has been sarcastically, and yet rather happily, called "hair architecture." Among civilized nations this art has generally been exercised only upon the hair of women, but among savages it is more often the men who seek to improve their appearance by such methods.

The scalp-lock of the American Indians, with its attendant adornment of feathers, and the curious towers and turrets constructed on the heads of some African warriors and chiefs, are examples. On the other hand, the pigtails of the Chinese show that a people possessing a high degree of civilization may cultivate a similar taste.

Like house architecture, the hair-builders' art has taken several characteristic forms of styles. None of these styles seems to have been more beautiful than that of the ancient Hebrews, whose women were accustomed to have their dark, glossy hair skilfully plaited, and then confined with gold and silver pins, and adorned with precious stones. Says the writer of "Solomon's Song" of the prince's daughter: "Thine head upon thee is like carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries."

The Greeks of Athens curled and netted their hair, and adorned it with pearls, gems, flowers and ribbons. The Egyptian men appear generally to have cut and shaved their hair, while the women wore theirs in long plaits. The Assyrian men, on the contrary, wore long hair, trained into curls.

The Roman women were among the first to develop a taste for constructions of great height on their heads, composed partly of natural and partly of false, or borrowed, hair, which was frizzed, colored and ornamented with jewels and flowers. Often these constructions consisted of several "stories," piled up by art and skill of slaves, while the mistress watched their operations, and made suggestions, with the aid of a mirror, like a modern Parisian lady superintending the work of her coiffeur.

St. Paul is credited with having had a decisive influence on the style of hair-dressing with his dictum that it was shameful for men to wear long hair and for women not to do so.

The reign of Elizabeth in England was a period when immense constructions of hair on women's heads were most popular, but in queen Anne's time this fashion was again prevalent, and was even carried to greater lengths. The preparation of a lady's hair for a ball at that time was often an undertaking requiring two days. About that time, too, the fashion of powdering the hair became common. Similar styles prevailed in France.

If we think that some of these things were ridiculous, we have only to remember the "chignons" of the 19th century in order to perceive that nobody can predict or escape the vagaries of Dame Fashion.